



LUDWIG-  
MAXIMILIANS-  
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MÜNCHEN



# Newsletter

#1 Winter term 2023/24



## Introduction

Welcome to the first quarterly newsletter of the Center for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences / Kolleg-Forschungsgruppe (KFG) “Universalism and Particularism in European Contemporary History” located at the School of History at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München.

The KFG is an interdisciplinary research group, which is a Center for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG). The goal of the KFG is to better understand the complex ways in which universalist and particularist models of order were transmitted and layered on each other in European contemporary history.

The KFG is led by three directors. They are:

- [Professor Dr. Martin Schulze Wessel | Professor of Eastern and Southeastern European History](#)
- [Professor Dr. Kiran Klaus Patel | Professor of Modern History](#)
- [Professor Dr. Andreas Wirsching | Professor of Contemporary History](#)

Every semester the KFG has a different research focus. So far, the KFG explored the subjects “Religion and Secularity” (Summer term 2023) and “The Economy” (Winter term 2023/24). In the upcoming Summer term, the KFG will examine the topic of “Human Rights”.

The KFG has a cooperation partner in the Gerda Henkel Foundation and the associated L.I.S.A. Science Portal, who recently sat down with the KFG director Martin Schulze Wessel to talk about the KFG and its goals:

**L.I.S.A.:** A new research group (KFG) has been founded at the LMU Munich School of History. The title of the KFG is: "Universalism and Particularism in European Contemporary History". Before we get into some details - how did this research group come about? What observations and considerations preceded it?

**Schulze Wessel:** We have witnessed the dramatic change since 1989: from the prematurely proclaimed "end of history" to the history of new nationalisms and imperial states that abandon the principles of multilateral, value-based politics in international relations and propagate democracy without adjectives or introduce dictatorship in domestic politics. From a liberal perspective, this is a of disappointment that has been told many times. We ask: What are the concepts that can be used to analyze change in a differentiated way? How is it to be conceptualized, in a way that can be connected to different subject groups? "Universalism" and "particularism" is a pair of concepts that proves immensely informative for analysis. We are not concerned with the simple narrative "from the universalism of 1989 to the particularism of the present," but with overlaps, contradictions, and paradoxes. How does a transition from universalist to particularist orders take place? How do new universalisms emerge? These are questions that interest us together with the Fellows.

**L.I.S.A.:** The tension between universalistic and particularistic concepts can be observed in several social fields and explored accordingly. Which sub-areas should be in the foreground within the KFG? Is there a certain emphasis or a concrete programmatic sequence? And: Who leads the respective sections?

**Schulze Wessel:** We have defined three areas: Religion, Business, Human Rights. We will be focusing specifically on the areas of intersection. We do not have a rigid assignment of the three areas to the three applicants (Prof. Dr. Martin Schulze Wessel, Prof. Dr. Kiran Klaus Patel, Prof. Dr. Andreas Wirsching, all LMU Munich) in order to avoid a pillarization of the KFG. Each of us feels responsible for at least two areas.

In addition to thematic conferences on universalism and particularism, we also conduct workshops that relate and comparatively discuss key concepts in the humanities and in the social sciences. To give an example, do we mean the same or quite different things when we speak of "path dependencies" or of "traditions"? We also see the KFG as an opportunity for a new dialogue between the two groups of subjects in the humanities and the social sciences.

The entire interview (in German) is available on [L.I.S.A.](#)

### The Fellowship program of the KFG

At the center of the KFG are its fellows, who work on their own research projects and contribute to the KFG's research on the concepts of Universalism and Particularism. Three Distinguished Fellows accompany the KFG's work for the entirety of the project's duration while Senior and Junior Fellows participate throughout their stays in Munich which can be up to six months long.

### The Distinguished Fellows of the KFG are:

- [Prof. Dr. Marta Bucholc](#) (University of Warsaw, Poland)  
*Religious Family Values: Nationalism and Universalism Reconsidered*
- [Prof. Dr. Alexander Libman](#) (Free University of Berlin, Germany)  
*Social Sciences in Russia before the War: Integration, Isolation, Political Impact*
- [Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Dr. h.c. Angelika Nußberger](#) (University of Cologne, Germany)  
*"Alienation" in Human Rights Protection - a New Split between East and West?*

### The KFG Junior fellows currently residing in Munich are:

- [Prof. Dr. Grace Ballor](#) (University Bocconi, Milan, Italy)  
*Risk Management: European governance between Crises (EURISK)*
- [Dr. Benjamin Thomas](#) (University of Nottingham, UK)  
*Encounters with the Transnational Ideological Family: Articulating Particularism and Universalism in the European Centre-Right*
- [Dr. Max Trecker](#) (Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO), Germany)  
*Economic Concepts for a New Country? The Struggle for Ukraine's Economic Future between Perestroika and the Orange Revolution (1985-2004)*

### Access the KFG's work online

As part of cooperation with the Gerda Henkel Foundation the KFG publishes selected lectures from our colloquium and regular conferences online. Some of the most recent contributions are:

- Philipp Ther's lecture ["Towards a Global Business and Labor History: The Transformation of Shipyards since the Late 1970s"](#) at this winter term's colloquium
- Michaela Lenčářová's talk on ["The Concept of the Right to National Self-Determination as a Fundamental Human Right in Slovak Catholic Thinking After the 1970s"](#) at this winter term's colloquium
- Anu Bradford's lecture on ["The Evolution of the Brussels Effect"](#) at the [KFG's conference in December 2023](#)

### Upcoming events

#### a. Workshop

The KFG will conclude this winter term with a workshop on **"Contested visions of social Europe(s) in the 1970s"** by our **Junior Fellow Benjamin Thomas**. Other participants in the workshop will be **Michele Di Donato** (University of Roma Tre), **Josef Hien** (Mid Sweden University), **Aleksandra Komornicka** (University of Maastricht) and **Fabio Wolkenstein** (University of Vienna)

The workshop will take place on February 23 at the Collegium Carolinum (Hochstraße 8, 81669 Munich). Participation is possible in person or online. To register contact us at [kfg20@lrz.uni-muenchen.de](mailto:kfg20@lrz.uni-muenchen.de)

You can find the [full program](#) on the KFG website.

#### b. Conference:

##### Upcoming: Human Rights Between Universalism and Particularism

Date: 6–7 June, 2024

Location: Institut für Zeitgeschichte München Leonrodstr. 46b, 80636 Munich

Organizer: Andreas Wirsching (LMU Munich)

More information will soon be available on our [homepage](#).

##### Previously: Between Collapse, Integration and Co-Transformation

The conference report has now been published on H-Soz-Kult and can be accessed [here](#).